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HEADLINE: CIA Officer Ousted Over JFK Files

BODY:

A Central Intelligence Agency officer who was assisting the House Assassinations Committee investigation into the 1963 murder of President John F. Kennedy was dismissed after his fingerprints were found on sensitive material kept in a committee safe, the CIA acknowledged June 17. [See p. 166C1]

CIA spokesman Herbert Hetu said the officer, Regis T. Blahut, was dismissed in the summer of 1978 after the rifled files were discovered by committee members.

Hetu said the agency was satisfied that the incident was simply "a matter of curiosity" on Blahut's part.

The Washington Post reported June 18 that "informed sources" said there had been an unauthorized entry into the locked safe, where the committee kept physical evidence of the assassination, including autopsy photos, X-rays, and the so-called "magic bullet" that wounded both President Kennedy and then-Texas Gov. John B. Connally.

The Post article said that sources said nothing had been taken from the files.

The newspaper quoted Blahut as saying there was an innocent explanation for his action. Blahut refused to give it, saying he had signed an oath of secrecy with the CIA.

Sources close to the House committee's chief counsel, G. Robert Blakey, were quoted by the Post as saying that Blahut had failed three polygraph examinations.

The Post quoted one source as claiming: "He (Blahut) denied he did it, and he flunked that. They also asked him whether anyone ordered him to do it. He said no one and he flunked that."

Blahut insisted in his interview with the Post that he had come through the tests with his credibility unblemished. Blahut had been detailed to assist the committee with the CIA records it needed for its investigation.

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